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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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# **LEADER OF TUCSON DRUG DISTRIBUTION ORGANIZATION AND OTHERS CHARGED WITH NARCOTICS VIOLATIONS**

**PHOENIX** – The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on September 15, 2004, Mark Anthony Simmons, DOB 6/11/71; Ernest Ron Washington, DOB 11/28/63; Antonio Barajas Salazar, aka Carlos Enriquez Rendon, DOB 6/10/63, all of Tucson, Ariz.; and Miguel Angel Quiroz, DOB 6/22/59, of San Manuel, Ariz. were charged by criminal complaint in federal district court.

The criminal complaint charges Simmons, with violating Title 21, U.S. Code. Section 848, Continuing Criminal Enterprise; Title 21 U.S. Code Section 846, Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Marijuana; and Title 21 U.S. Code Section 841(a)(1), Possession with Intent to Distribute Marijuana. Co-Defendants Washington, Quiroz and Salazar, aka Rendon, are charged with conspiracy and substantive drug violations.

The complaint alleges that Simmons was the leader of a drug organization that distributed multi-hundred pound quantities of marijuana from Arizona to Ohio and elsewhere. In 2001,

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Simmons' drug organization had in excess of 3 kilograms seized at the Philadelphia, Penn. airport. In 2004, Simmons' drug organization had multi-hundred pound quantities of marijuana seized in Arizona, Missouri, Ohio and New Mexico. Simmons owned G&S Trucking, based in Tucson, Ariz., that he used to transport quantities of marijuana across the United States. Two of the eighteen wheeler rigs were seized in 2004 while they were carrying marijuana loads.

A conviction for a violation of Section 848 carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, a \$2 million dollar fine or both. A conviction for a violation of Section 846 carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and a \$4 million dollar fine. A conviction for a violation of Section 841(a)(1) carries a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$2 million dollar fine. The co-defendants face up to life imprisonment on the conspiracy charge with a \$4 million dollar fine and up to 40 years in prison on the substantive counts and a \$2 million dollar fine.

A criminal complaint is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Pima County Sheriff's Office and the Apache Count Sheriff's Office.

The prosecution is being handled by James T. Lacey, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER:           MAG 04-5274M  
RELEASE NUMBER:       2004-154

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